

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Art Unit	: 3629	Customer No. 035811
Examiner	: Michael J. Fisher	
Serial No.	: 10/640,852	Docket No.: 1175-R-01
Filed	: August 14, 2003	
Inventor(s)	: Michael Sheinson	Confirmation No.: 9173
	: Art DeLaurier	
	: Mike McFall	
	: Santiago Ramirez	
Title	: LEAD GENERATION SYSTEM	
	: USING BUYER CRITERIA	

DECLARATION OF GRANT WHITMORE

1. I am employed by Consumer Guide.com as Vice-President and General Manager.
2. Consumer Guide.com has been a subscriber of the IntelliPrice Used Car Trade-in Calculator for more than three years. During this time, I have become very familiar with the IntelliPrice Calculator and the various features that contribute to its success.
3. I have reviewed U.S. Patent Application No. 10/640,852. The application accurately describes the IntelliPrice Calculator in all relevant respects. The claims of the patent application, including new claim 41, recite all of the significant features that account for the commercial success of IntelliPrice.
4. In the three years that ConsumerGuide.com has been using it, we have seen exceptional consumer acceptance of the IntelliPrice product. We have been pleased with its consistent ability to provide a steady stream of revenue based on its unique ability to generate new car leads in exchange for used vehicle trade-in pricing information. In my professional opinion, this product is the first of its kind and is truly a breakthrough technology. Please see my specific comments on this product below.
5. The Calculator application walks users through a variety of questions to determine a vehicle's condition. Questions take into account: options, color, mileage, routine wear-and-tear, damage, and location to arrive at a value that a consumer can reasonably expect to be offered at a car dealership when attempting to trade-in their vehicle for the purchase of a new one. However, the application is *very* specific in its direction that it requires a trip to the dealership in order to verify the price.
6. From Consumer Guide.com's standpoint the most significant aspect of the Calculator application is the manner in which it generates a new vehicle purchase request (lead) as part of

the trade-in calculation. At the end of the trade-in information gathering process, the consumer user is passed through a lead generation form that gathers their contact information and purchase intent on their intended replacement vehicle.

7. The new car lead information gathered as part of the trade-in calculation is a valuable commodity when sold into the retail and wholesale markets. Consumer Guide.com routinely generates thousands of leads each month for its retail dealers and wholesale partners as a result of the Calculator application. Interestingly, the implementation of the tool has done nothing to impede the results of Consumer Guide.com's other lead generation effort. I, and more importantly, our users, view this as complimentary and additive to our more traditional lead generation activities.

8. As measured by our internal analysts, the leads generated through the Calculator application are high quality as demonstrated by their better-than-average closing rate at the dealerships. The closing rate (percentage of leads that mature into sales) for leads generated by IntelliPrice is 9% while leads from all other sources generally close at a rate of only 4.5%.

9. We think the reason for the high closing rate on IntelliPrice leads is two-fold. First, the lead flows through our system with additional information that is valuable to the dealer - the specific data on a consumer's trade-in will help the car dealer better assess the deal value and make an appropriate initial offer to the customer. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the customer is prepared with unique information provided by an independent source that will validate the offer from the dealership. In other words, the customer's expectations are properly set prior to arriving at the dealership, and the customer is more likely to feel comfortable with the transaction.

10. Prior to the IntelliPrice Calculator, the conventional manner of generating a vehicle purchase request (lead) was for a customer to submit their personal information in exchange for a "free price quote" from a local dealer. This method of lead generation has been available online since 1996, and in telephone form since at least the early 90's.

11. The IntelliPrice Trade-in Calculator process is significantly different than any other new car lead generation prior to late 2004, as it provides a specific consumer benefit (a reliable trade-in price from an independent entity that is not affiliated with the dealership) in exchange for the lead data. To my knowledge, no other product existed on the market offering the same service until late 2004, early 2005 when both KBB.com and Edmunds.com introduced similar products.

12. Systems for merely estimating the value of a vehicle also existed prior to the IntelliPrice Calculator. However, none of those systems collected the vehicle owner's information in order to generate a sales lead in exchange for an independent estimated value.


13. The IntelliPrice Trade-in Calculator is drastically different from simple on-line value estimators. The use of a potential customer's contact information, collected in exchange for the independently generated estimated value of the trade-in, to generate a sales lead was completely

unknown at the time the IntelliPrice Calculator was launched. Never before had a system connected the step of providing an independently estimated value with the generation of a sales lead. This is because, to the best of my knowledge, the IntelliPrice Calculator is the first system to recognize that vehicle owners, who are seeking an unbiased estimated value for their vehicles, represent potential (and, in fact, probable) purchaser's of new vehicles. Based on this realization, the IntelliPrice Calculator is a first of its kind system for using contact information for those vehicle owners (collected in exchange for the estimated value) as a valuable resource for identifying sales leads.

14. I am a fan of the IntelliPrice Trade-in Calculator and am happy to offer it as a resource to our consumer visitors. There is no doubt as to the efficacy of its lead generation abilities. The IntelliPrice Trade-in Calculator serves a useful purpose in generating unique leads for our dealer and wholesale clients.

I declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under §1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application and any patent issuing thereon.

06-15-05
Date


Grant Whitmore